(c) whether Government have ever made any study of their status and how to improve their socio-economic conditions, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) to (c) There is no such proposal.

However, a National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities has been set up to *inter-alia* suggest criteria for identification of socially and economically backward sections among religious and linguistic minorities and to recommend measures for the welfare of socially and economically backward sections amongst religious and linguistic minorities.

No specific study has been taken up for these four States.

Welfare schemes for minorities

68. SHRI M. V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any new programmes and schemes for the welfare of minorities in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof, scheme-wise; and

(c) the effective measures being taken by Government to implement the above policy?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) and (b) In June 2006, the Prime Minister's New 15 Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities has been announced which provides for enhancing opportunities for education, equitable share in economic activities and employment; improving the conditions of living of minorities, and wherever possible, earmarking of 15% of targets and outlays under various schemes for minorities. The programme is available on the website of the Ministry at www.minorityaffairs.gov.in.

(c) The programme envisages that the progress of implementation is reviewed regularly by the Central Government. States/UTs have been advised to put a similar mechanism in place.